

Supporting Statement - NASA Procurement Customer Survey

A. Justification

1. This survey is needed to determine whether NASA procurement offices are providing an acceptable level of service to the business/educational community, and if not, which areas need improvement. There are no specific legal or administrative requirements necessitating this collection.
2. The information will be used by the NASA Assistant Administrator for Procurement to assist in evaluating the degree to which the NASA field center procurement offices are providing high quality customer service outside the Agency. The information will also enable the offices to develop improvements in an efficient and effective manner, and may help combat waste and abuse in the NASA procurement process.
3. The proposed information collection will be completely automated. The invitation to potential respondents will be issued electronically via Fed Biz Ops. The invitation will include a "hotlink" to a NASA website with the survey instrument. Respondents will complete the survey on-line and submit it via the web. Results will be electronically compiled into a file that will be downloaded to a NASA analyst's computer. The analyst will execute a macro that converts the file to Microsoft Excel format, automatically runs calculations on the data, and produces printer-ready reports. The subject information collection is conducted ADHOC and on demand. It is completely anonymous with no IIF, PII or Privacy Act implications. The information collected is purely statistical and serves only to provide NASA Agency Procurement management with the information required in order to develop improvements in an efficient and effective manner.
4. A prior survey of external NASA procurement vendors was conducted in 2002. That survey identified areas that could be improved. Sufficient time has elapsed since that survey that we believe another survey would be useful in assessing whether NASA's procurement operations have improved and, if so, the extent of the improvement, and identifying those areas still needing improvement. Anecdotal information could be obtained from reading court cases and protest files, but it would be suspect because it only comes from parties suing NASA and who would therefore be expected to be prejudiced against the Agency. In addition, the information from those sources cannot provide the broad level of information about the many aspects of NASA's procurement operations that can be derived from a survey.
5. There is no impact on small business because the survey is voluntary and anonymous.
6. The proposed survey does not support any specific Federal program or policy. If the survey is not conducted, NASA will have to guess whether its procurement vendors are satisfied. This in turn may lead to inappropriate changes in NASA procurement procedures, resulting in waste and possibly abuse. Further, lack of a survey may result in the continuation of unidentified waste and abuse. Because the collection will be done in an

entirely automated fashion, and doesn't call for respondents to collect or store any information, we don't believe it is technically possible to further reduce the burden.

7. In order to elicit frank and forthright responses, we intend to include what might be considered a pledge of confidentiality. By this we mean that respondents are not required to identify themselves, and we will make no attempt through electronic means or otherwise to learn who they are.

8. A Federal Register Notice (FRN) was published in the Federal Register for public comment to the Agency. No comments on the subject information collection were received from the public for a period of 60 days. The FRN was published on January 7, 2009, page 727, Vol. 74, No. 4.

In addition, based on the results of the previous vendor survey and other internal surveys, we are led to believe that we have sufficient experience to provide clear survey instructions, relevant questions in number and content, with optimal format and frequency. Further, the information being collected is opinion, as opposed to hard data or fact, so there is no issue regarding availability of data.

9. No payment or gift will be provided to respondents.

10. Respondents are not required to identify themselves, and we will assure them that we will make no attempt through electronic means or otherwise to learn who they are.

11. There are no sensitive questions.

12. The number of respondents cannot be reliably estimated, since response is voluntary, and there is no reward or penalty to motivate participation. We hope to obtain 1,000 responses per survey. We believe it will take about 15 minutes to complete the survey. Therefore, the total burden is estimated to be 250 hours per survey. We expect to space out the surveys sufficiently to give us time to implement changes before the next survey. This means we plan to issue the survey no more frequently than once every two or three years. The average total annual burden would therefore be 83 hours over three years. The annualized cost to each respondent, assuming a salary equivalent to \$67 per hour (GS-15 step 10), would be \$5.58, with a total annualized cost of \$5,583. If there are fewer responses, the total annualized cost will be less.

13. Respondents will have no capital or start-up costs, and no maintenance costs.

14. The total estimated costs to the Federal Government are: \$2,400 per survey to modify existing survey software; \$1,600 (3 days for a GS-15) to analyze the data and prepare a report. This equates to a total annualized cost of \$1,333.

15. The annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden borne by the public was misunderstood. It was assumed to have been zero, since the previous two Information Collection Request (ICR) 83-I's had a value of zero for the cost burden on the public. However, the burden on the public is very real in this survey since vendors who have bid on

NASA contracts, but have never received an award or do not currently have a contract, are being requested to participate in the survey as respondents and they are bearing the cost of filling out the survey. In addition, vendors that currently have NASA contracts are filling out the survey outside the scope of their contract. See the answer to Question 12 for cost burden information.

16. We do not plan to publish the results; however, we do plan to post them to NASA's Procurement Library web site (<http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/surveys/vendsurv.html>) to which the public has access. Our plan to post the results and where they will be posted will be included in the Fed Biz Ops announcement with the link to the survey. The NASA Procurement Library web site contains the results from NASA's prior vendor survey. NASA plans to conduct the vendor survey, collect and review the responses, and post the results in the first quarter of FY 2007.

17. The expiration date will be displayed.

18. No certification exceptions are required.